

# **Committee Name:** **Senate Committee – Judiciary, Corrections and Privacy (SC–JCP)**

## **Appointments**

03hr\_SC–JCP\_Appt\_pt00

## **Committee Hearings**

03hr\_SC–JCP\_CH\_pt00

## **Committee Reports**

03hr\_SC–JCP\_CR\_pt00

## **Clearinghouse Rules**

03hr\_SC–JCP\_CRule\_03–

## **Executive Sessions**

03hr\_SC–JCP\_ES\_pt00

# **Hearing Records**

03hr\_ab0000

# **03hr\_sb0214a\_pt03**

## **Misc.**

03hr\_SC–JCP\_Misc\_pt00

## **Record of Committee Proceedings**

03hr\_SC–JCP\_RCP\_pt00



## Fax Cover Letter

Name: Bob & John

Company/Department: Sum. Zien

Fax number: 267-6794

Date: 10/13/03

Total number of pages including cover sheet: 2

From: Jodi Bloch

Message: Call if you have questions 441-1206

## What's New at the WBA

### New WBA Product: Record Retention Guidelines Now Available

A record retention guideline manual to help Wisconsin banks create their own customized record retention policy is now available for WBA members. The guidelines are divided into five parts: (1) what a record retention policy should contain; (2) electronic versus paper retention of documents; (3) relevant federal and state laws and regulations with specific record retention requirements; (4) a schedule listing important bank documents and the minimum period for retention; and (5) two documents from the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council (FFIEC) related to record retention. To order your Record Retention Guidelines, you may purchase one to three copies at \$225 each or four or more at \$195 each. You may choose from the notebook or CD-Rom format. To order, contact WBA's Tiffyn Riese at 608/441-1207, or save time and order online at [www.wisbank.com](http://www.wisbank.com).

### Register Today for FinCrime, Protect Your Bank From Check Fraud

WBA is offering its member banks free access to an 11-state FinCrime database through 2003. To register for the free access go to [www.fincrim.com](http://www.fincrim.com). At the web site, banks may submit case information and then receive alerts on crimes in their area. For more information, contact WBA's Kim Kindschi at 608/441-1204 or [kkindschi@wisbank.com](mailto:kkindschi@wisbank.com).

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To: Senate Judiciary, Corrections & Privacy Committee Members  
From: Jodi Bloch, Director-Government Relations  
Date: October 13, 2003  
Re: Support for Senate Substitute Amendments to SB 214

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On behalf of the Wisconsin Bankers Association, which represents over 320 financial institutions in Wisconsin, I want to express support for two amendments to SB 214. The amendments allow private property owners including employers to decide for themselves whether or not they want to prohibit customers or employees from carrying a concealed weapon on their property.

Senator Zien should be commended for working with interested parties to come up with a practical solution to resolve this problem that recognizes the rights of property owners, while balancing the right of people to bear arms in Wisconsin. These amendments provide a very workable solution so that the law will be clear for individuals who want to carry a concealed weapon where the boundaries are.

---

~~Please support these amendments that allow for a notice posting on private~~  
property. If you have any questions, you may contact me at 608/441-1206.

4721 SOUTH BIRMINGHAM LANE  
MADISON, WI 53718

P.O. Box 8880  
MADISON, WI 53708-8880

608-441-1200  
Fax 608-661-9381

[www.wisbank.com](http://www.wisbank.com)

To whom it may concern:

My name is Tom Bice, I would like to start by saying that I am 51 years old, I am self employed, I am a Navy veteran, I have never been arrested, and I haven't had a traffic citation since 1974. I feel at this point that we all should recognize that last year, the Assembly has spent a lot of hard hours on this issue. The criminal justice committee voted 10 to 4 on this only after serious, careful consideration.

Forty five states have a law that allows citizens to carry a concealed weapon. That is because it works, it is the right thing to do. No state has ever revoked the law after passing it. This won't change the criminals in our society, they obey the law. Citizens that choose not to be involved with a concealed weapon, will benefit from this law because criminals won't know if that citizen can defend themselves or not. For those of you who don't understand the dynamics and the mentality of this bill please don't let baseless emotion prevent this bill from becoming law.

In the state of Florida, where people have been carrying concealed weapons for over 15 years, the fact that some one has a license or carries a weapon is not a common topic of conversation. Only a small number of license holders carry a weapon consistently. I will point out to you that if some deranged person were to come in that back door and start shooting at us randomly, there is probably not one person in here that could stop the shooter before he gets to you. This is the world that we live in. We must allow stable background checked, trained and licensed citizens to defend themselves.

Law abiding citizen,

Tom Bice

N19332 Ziegler Lane

Trempealeau, Wisconsin 54661

Phone: 608 539 3172

## Testimony on Proposed Carry Concealed Weapons Bill

My name is Richard W. Myers, and I am the police chief for the City of Appleton, Wisconsin. I have been a police chief for 20 years, and a police officer for 27 years and am a Past President of the Wisconsin Chiefs of Police Association. My purpose today is to discuss the implications of the proposed bill on issuing carry concealed weapons permits on policing in Wisconsin's 6th largest city, Appleton.

Since the mid 1990's, the Appleton-Neenah-Oshkosh metropolitan statistical area has ranked in the top three spots as safest in the nation. Several years, we have been number one. Additionally, there are often five or six Wisconsin MSA's within the top ten national rankings of safest metropolitan areas. Madison, Green Bay, Wausau, Eau Claire, La Crosse, Kenosha....all of these regions rank among the nations safest communities based upon crime statistics. To me, this poses a question....WHY ARE WE CONSIDERING THIS?

Appleton's population is now well over 70,000. Our quality of life is exceptional. The biggest crime issues I hear about day after day from my residents are speeding cars in neighborhoods, loud car stereos, and disorderly behaviors by intoxicated people in our downtown "entertainment district". We average less than one homicide a year in Appleton. Violent crime in our community is an aberration that may get much attention but does not stimulate panic. So I ask....WHY ARE WE CONSIDERING THIS?

Our policing philosophy is that we serve in a partnership with our community, and that we reflect the expectations for quality of life that our taxpayers desire. To do this, we constantly train to use minimal force, and to be mindful of our interactions with citizens. It has been many, many years since an Appleton officer has had to use deadly force, thank God for that, and while our officers do encounter armed offenders it is not common and we apply our professional training and skills to quickly control the situation. So, I ask....WHY ARE WE CONSIDERING THIS?

Over the past several years, our agency, like most in Wisconsin, have been not only maintaining the necessary skills to apply lethal force, but have introduced and practiced an increasing application of less-lethal force. I'd like to briefly address both lethal and less-lethal force in Wisconsin.

First, before we ever equip an officer with deadly force, they must survive a rigorous series of physical and psychological tests. Our stringent hiring process selects the top 1% to be entrusted with the awesome responsibility of depriving citizens of their liberties or using deadly force. Even after hiring, there are weeks of training in academy, then with a supervising officer. Our residents expect and demand this level of preparedness for people to carry weapons...NONE of which is included in the proposal to provide for permits to carry. So, I ask....WHY ARE WE CONSIDERING THIS? IS HAVING UNTRAINED AND UNSCREENED CITIZENS WALKING AROUND THE COMMUNITY ARMED WHAT THE PEOPLE OF WISCONSIN WANT?

Millions of dollars are being spent to develop weaponry that is less lethal than a handgun, rifle, or shotgun. Much of this technology has already been deployed. In Appleton, we have evolved from just carrying a baton, to adding pepper spray, to now having additional resources. We've attained weapons that fire either rubber projectiles, or adaptations to our shotguns that fire "bean bag" rounds. We have successfully deployed these in situations where deadly force was fully justified. In one example, a disturbed person armed with a knife would not surrender. This person would have justifiably been shot and probably killed with a handgun by officers, but instead was stunned by the use of less-lethal rounds and lived to receive the treatment he needed.

Another new tool in our toolkit is the electronic stun device, or TASER. In Appleton, we are deploying the TASER almost monthly, with little or no injury to an offender, where we previously may have had to use an impact weapon like a baton or even a deadly force application. These less lethal devices are saving lives right here in Wisconsin, and reducing the potential need to apply deadly force by police.

In contrast, we now face a flood of untrained, unscreened, and undisciplined persons carrying around deadly force as provided for in this proposed bill. All our work to advance the use of less lethal force by police suddenly becomes secondary to the need to prepare them for frequent encounters with deadly force. I just can't keep from asking....WHY ARE WE CONSIDERING THIS?

Downtown Appleton has become a popular entertainment venue. The hallmark of our community's effort is the new, \$45 million Performing Arts Center. Running along College Avenue for blocks in both directions are dozen after dozen of licensed taverns, restaurants, and nightclubs. Throw in a few thousand young people "cruising" the Avenue on a summer night, and you can see why we deploy a lot of police resources in our downtown. The biggest thing we encounter now are the occasional fistfights outside the front door of a bar....but that may all change when even a handful of visitors are permitted to carry deadly force. This proposed law turns all citizens into potential victims, as it greatly increases the opportunities for offenders to use deadly force.

Proponents of this concept point to Wisconsin as one of a few states left that don't issue any type of permit. I point to Wisconsin being among a handful of the safest states in the nation. Proponents try to link this proposal with the rich tradition of hunting and sport shooting with long-guns in Wisconsin. Let's remember, this is really about giving police powers of deadly force through handguns to whoever wants it, absents those standards police officers must first meet.

I'm not here as a politician, and I don't represent special interest groups, big ticket lobbying organizations, or even a political party. I'm here as someone YOUR constituents has entrusted to try to maintain the public safety....THAT is my agenda. This proposed legislation in its present form is simply bad public policy. Thank you for your attention.

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**Firearm deaths**  
Number of firearm deaths in southeastern Wisconsin by gender.

COUNTY	GENDER	HOMICIDE		SUICIDE		UNINTENTIONAL	
		2000	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999
Milwaukee	Male	280	261	137	107	8	100
	Female	28	21	20	12	7	10
Other	Male	25	20	148	150	0	0
	Female	10	20	15	16	0	0
Total	Male	319	299	285	199	8	100
	Female	48	39	35	28	7	10

Other category is Kenosha, Ozaukee, Racine, Sheboygan, Walworth, Washington and Waukesha counties.  
Male, who make up 80% of the total population, accounts for the majority of firearm deaths. Unintentional and self-inflicted injuries account for 15% of the total.

# suicide rate is higher in Wisconsin

White males

Firearms most  
often used in  
homicide, suicide

WISCONSIN

SUNDAY, MAY 9, 1999 MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL

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was unloaded fired, hitting child in chest

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# AIMING FOR SAFETY

A SURVEY OF PUBLIC OPINION  
ON GUN POLICY IN WISCONSIN

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Howard was sentenced on a  
charge of being a party to first-  
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armed. He pleaded guilty to the  
charge in July.

October day but also implica  
another man as having fi-  
shots. Public defenders  
Moore and Barry Slagle  
tended that the other  
charged shooter was likely  
killer.

Firearm that recognizes  
owner could be used by  
2000, manufacturer says

By DAVE DALEY  
of the Journal Sentinel staff

So-called "smart guns" —  
firearms that recognize their  
owners through fingerprints,  
radio emissions or skin con-  
ductivity — could be available

Bar owner  
dies after  
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Kenosha man removed  
magazine from weapon,  
but ammunition remained

By DAVID COLE  
Special to the Journal Sentinel

West side boy, 7,  
killed in gun accident

After finding weapon in  
drawer, he apparently  
tripped with it, was shot



his father's  
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By VIKKI ORT  
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# Gun suicides high in north

By JESSICA MCBRIDE  
and JAMES H. GURNETT III  
of the Journal Sentinel staff

The North Woods might mean  
peace and quiet for many, but it  
has a higher rate of firearm sui-  
cide than anywhere else in the  
state, with young men most  
tragedy.

Study finds murder rate highest in Milwaukee area

which the Firearm Injury Center  
at the Medical College of Wiscon-  
sin released.

idents lost their lives as a result  
of firearm injuries from 1990 to  
1998, the report found — as many  
people are live in Colum-

people died by firearm in Wis-  
consin in 1998: 270 suicides, 136  
homicides and 12 accidents.

cides in the state in-  
accounted for just 31% of  
suicides, the report found.  
One of the most re-  
findings in the report  
there are high concentra-  
firearm homicide and  
—de among men ages  
to Harvard

rearm related suicides similar  
rural and urban areas,  
higher in urban

Suburbanites found to be more likely  
to use firearms to end their lives

By GARY RUMMLER  
of the Journal Sentinel staff

The suicide rate in Milwaukee  
County suburbs is higher than

County. She said the county  
suburban population is primar-  
ly white and "suicide is most  
common in the white popula-  
tion than in the minority



WISCONSIN COUNCIL ON  
CHILDREN  
& FAMILIES  
Focus on Wisconsin's Children

# AIMING FOR SAFETY TABLE OF CONTENTS

A Survey of Public Opinion on Gun Policy in Wisconsin

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For a copy of the Survey questionnaire and detailed survey results  
see the Council on Children and Families web site [www.wccf.org](http://www.wccf.org)

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By Dave DALRY  
of the Journal Sentinel

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## A I M I N G   F O R   S A F E T Y A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

*WisKids Count* is a project of the Wisconsin-Council on Children and Families, Inc. and is funded through the generous support of The Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Charles D. Jacobus Family Foundation, the Wisconsin Education Association Council, The Medical College of Wisconsin, Kohl's Charities, We Energies, First Business Bank and Hausmann Insurance.

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WisKids Count Coordinator

Art Direction and Design: Michael Martin Design

Printing: Great Graphics! Inc.

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## Introduction

**E**very day in this country, nine children are killed by gunfire - that's one boy or girl every two and one half hours. Here in Wisconsin, 146 children have died as a result of gunfire in the last five years, and many more have been injured or witnessed violence.<sup>1</sup> National studies indicate that for every gun related fatality there are four gun-inflicted injuries.

In 2001, the Brady Foundation gave Wisconsin a rating of C+. Cited as positive factors were: 1) adequate juvenile possession and sales restrictions; 2) the Child Access Prevention law; 3) the ban on carrying concealed weapons; and 4) a 48-hour waiting period for handgun purchases. However, Wisconsin does not have any consumer safety standards; does not require background checks for private sales; and prohibits local municipalities from enacting stricter laws.<sup>2</sup>

While advocates for gun regulation argue with the gun lobby over the extent to which guns should be regulated for adults, most people in both groups agree that young children should not have access to firearms.

Through a grant from the National Association of Child Advocates and the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Council commissioned a survey by the Public Policy Forum of Milwaukee to assess public opinion on legislative measures that could keep children safe from gun injury and death. Public opinion surveys can guide policy decisions, by helping state and community leaders understand public concerns. The objective of this report is to provide a detailed look at the issue of handgun safety from the perspective of citizens who live in the State of Wisconsin.

This report presents information from the fourth in a series of surveys about handgun safety that have been conducted over the past six years by the Public Policy Forum. The Forum, a nonpartisan, non-profit research organization based in Milwaukee, conducts research on public policy issues.

*Aiming for Safety: A Survey of Public Opinion on Gun Policy* is intended to amplify the voice of the majority of Wisconsin residents who favor sensible gun policy. A majority of those surveyed support state legislation that does not limit gun sports enthusiasts, yet makes access to guns more difficult for criminals and children. These common sense policies fall into two main categories: 1) restricting access to guns by children; and 2) treating guns like every other consumer product.

This year, Public Knowledge, an independent consulting firm, conducted focus groups on this issue in four cities around the country including Appleton, Wisconsin. Participants overwhelmingly supported laws aimed at keeping children safe from guns. These opinions square with the majority of survey

### Gun Fact:

According to the Centers for Disease Control, the rate of firearm death for children under 15 is twelve times higher for kids in the US than for twenty-five other industrialized nations combined.

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respondents who favor policy changes such as background checks for *all* gun sales (not just sales from licensed gun dealers per current law) and a continued ban on carrying concealed loaded guns in Wisconsin. In addition, most focus group participants were surprised to learn that no consumer safety standards exist for guns made in the U.S.

## Gun Fact:

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that guns be removed from homes with children. Yet, studies estimate that less than 40 percent of households with children and guns, keep their guns locked and unloaded.

Guns, like prescription drugs, insecticides and many household cleaners, are inherently dangerous. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulates medications; the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) tests chemicals to make certain that they are safe for the environment. Even toys are regulated to make certain they don't have small parts that could present a hazard for children [Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC)]. Yet, the federal government does not regulate guns.<sup>iii</sup> States, however, are getting into the act. In several states, the Legislature and Attorney General have implemented gun safety standards that must be applied to all sales of firearms in their states. For example, Massachusetts requires pistols sold in the state to have either a magazine disconnect safety or a chamber loaded indicator to prevent unintentional shootings.<sup>iv</sup>

In addition to the survey results and analysis, we begin this report with an essay by Dr. William Perloff, entitled "Childhood Violence: A Plague on Society." Dr. Perloff, a pediatrician, is the Chair of the Wisconsin Child Fatality Review Team, the Wisconsin Emergency Medical Services for Children Advisory Board and is a member of the WCCF Board of Directors. Dr. Perloff discusses the profound effect that violence has on children. Whether as victims or witnesses, children are harmed cognitively, emotionally, and developmentally, according to Dr. Perloff.

This year, rather than publishing our annual data book covering a broad array of issues affecting children, we have chosen to focus on several areas of child well-being in Wisconsin. This report is the fourth in a series of WisKids Special Reports that focus on specific issues for children in our state. *Children's Mental Health, From Parenting to Policy Making* was published in December. The first, *Affordable Housing, a Crisis for Wisconsin Families*, was released in May 2002. *Standardized Testing, One Size Fits All?* was published in October 2002.

For detailed survey results and the survey questions please see the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families web site [www.wccf.org](http://www.wccf.org).

<sup>i</sup> From 1996 to 2000 there were 66 firearm suicides, 60 firearm homicides and 16 unintended firearm deaths to children under the age of 18. Data are from the Firearm Injury Prevention Center at the Medical College of Wisconsin.

<sup>ii</sup> Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, Web Address: <http://www.handguncontrol.org/>

<sup>iii</sup> *Making a Killing, the Business of Guns in America*, Tom Diaz, The New Press, 1999.

<sup>iv</sup> *Targeting Safety, How State Attorneys General Can Act Now to Save Lives*, Center to Prevent Handgun Violence, 2001

# Childhood Violence: A Plague On Society

BY WILLIAM H. PERLOFF, M.D., Ph.D., FAAP

## Introduction

**C**hildhood violence is endemic in our society, constituting a major public health problem. Children experience violence in many forms: as witnesses of domestic and community violence, as victims of physical and sexual abuse, or as participants in interpersonal violence or attempted suicide. Violent injury and death due to altercations between family members and acquaintances occur far more often than from criminal activity by strangers. When coupled with firearms, the violence assumes its most lethal form. The mass school shootings in Columbine and other communities are only the tip of a huge iceberg. More than 4,000 children and adolescents under 20 years of age are victims of firearm-related death annually in the United States. Indeed, more childhood firearm-related deaths occur in the U.S. than in the other 25 most prosperous nations combined.

## Effects of Violence

Violence has both direct and indirect effects on children and their development, ranging from death to injury and physical and emotional disability. It is clear that violent behavior has its antecedents in early childhood, the effects of which persist into adolescence and beyond. Mortality is the most dramatic and readily measurable consequence, and firearms are the usual cause. Approximately 100 Wisconsin infants, children and adolescents from birth to 19 years of age die from inflicted violence annually. Nearly one-half of these are due to homicide; most of the rest are due to suicide in the adolescent age group. Males are the victims of violent death in childhood more than 80 percent of the time, with firearms involved in almost 90 percent of the homicides and more than 75 percent of the suicides. The homicides are perpetrated primarily with handguns. Firearm-related homicide is the leading cause of death for African-American males from 15 to 19 years of age in Wisconsin and nationally. Teenage boys in all racial and ethnic groups are more likely to die from gunshot wounds than from all natural causes combined.

Suicide by adolescents is most often an impulsive act, reflecting the volatile emotions in this stage of life. Twenty percent of Wisconsin high school students admit to having seriously considered suicide,

**The mass school shootings in Columbine and other communities are only the tip of a huge iceberg.**

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It is estimated that there were 192 million firearms in the U.S. in 1994, 65 million of which were handguns, and 127 million were long guns. Fifty-five percent of handgun owners report leaving the guns loaded; many leave them loaded and unlocked. Gun ownership is a risk factor for firearm death in the home. A gun in the home is 37 times more likely to be used in a suicide and nearly five times more likely to be used in a criminal homicide than in self-defense. Suicide is five times and homicide three times more common in homes with guns than without.

According to the 2001 Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 46 percent of high school boys had carried a weapon in the previous month; eight percent had carried a gun (exclusive of hunting). Family and friends are the primary sources of guns for young people; only five percent have asked someone else to purchase a gun for them from legal or illegal sources. The significance of the availability of handguns is illustrated by the differences in assault and homicide rates in two sister cities: Vancouver, British Columbia, and Seattle, Washington. The much lower rate of assault and homicide in Vancouver has been attributed to regulation of the availability of handguns there.

Approximately five unintentional childhood deaths due to firearms occur annually in Wisconsin. A typical scenario is that of an unsupervised toddler or young child discovering a loaded handgun and killing himself or a playmate while exploring the new “toy.” In one recent study, more than three-fourths of eight to 12 year old boys who found a real handgun in a drawer handled the weapon. Approximately half of them pulled the trigger, despite having had gun safety instruction at some time prior to the study.

For every firearm-related death, there are between four and five nonfatal gun-related injuries. Among children under 15 years of age, the preponderance of injuries is unintentional. Two-thirds of the injuries in the 15 - 19 year old group are due to assault. Approximately one-half of injuries are severe enough to require admission to the hospital. Physical sequellae range from the trivial to profound disability. The number of individuals left paralyzed by a bullet each year is comparable to the total number paralyzed due to the polio epidemic of the 1950s. Psychological effects include anxiety and persistent symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Violent injury tends to recur in more than 40 percent of cases, with a five-year mortality of 20 percent in urban settings.

As witnesses to violence, children are harmed cognitively, emotionally, and developmentally. Furthermore, exposure to violence and victimization are strongly associated with subsequent violent

behavior by those exposed. Exposure to violence in TV shows, video games and movies also can lead to increased aggressive attitudes, values, and behavior in children. Studies of the effects of incessant TV violence on children suggest that they may: 1) become immune to the real horror of violence; 2) come to accept violence as a way to solve problems; 3) imitate the violence they observe; and 4) identify with victims or victimizers in unhealthy ways.

It is estimated that the mean medical cost per gunshot injury is approximately \$17,000. In 1994 in the U.S., this translated to \$2.3 billion in lifetime medical costs, of which almost one-half was paid by U.S. taxpayers. This estimate did not include the much greater economic cost of lost productivity for those who died or became permanently disabled. Based on an estimated 450 childhood gunshot injuries to Wisconsin children, the direct medical costs are approximately \$7.7 million. The true costs to society are, of course, much greater.

## Principles, Priorities and Recommendations

Youth violence can and must be prevented. The complex and pervasive nature of firearm-related violence in our society makes it clear that a comprehensive, broad-based approach is needed. The data discussed above suggest that at least three principles should underlie attempts at solutions:

1. Important long-term social changes that lead to reduced childhood exposure to violence are essential. Short term approaches such as building more prisons for violent offenders will not solve the problem.
2. Involvement of the entire community is required, from individual families to schools to public health and social service agencies to health and mental health professionals to child and community advocates to law enforcement and the justice system to the political leadership to the media. A concerted effort from all segments of society is needed to improve the safety and well-being of all children and youth.
3. Inappropriate access of children and adolescents to firearms, especially handguns, is an essential component of any approach to reduce the unconscionably high firearm-related childhood mortality rate in Wisconsin and the United States. It is clear that intentional firearm use by adolescents, whether for assault or suicide, is impulsive, and unintentional use is not susceptible to training.

Translating these principles into action requires establishing specific priorities from which actions can flow. A major resource for guidance in mobilizing community efforts is the

**Youth violence can and must be prevented. The complex and pervasive nature of firearm-related violence in our society makes it clear that a comprehensive, broad-based approach is needed.**

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**Communities exert powerful influences on the ability of families to raise healthy children. Healthy communities support healthy families.**

Commission for the Prevention of Youth Violence (CPYV). Funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, CPYV is composed of representatives from medical, nursing, psychiatric, public health and governmental constituencies. Based on extensive review of the literature and hearings involving scores of witnesses from all segments of the community, the CPYV has identified seven key priorities for reducing youth violence. These are summarized below and quoted in part, with some modifications to adapt them to a statewide focus.

***Priority 1: Support the development of healthy families.***

Violence prevention begins in the home. Children exposed to violence, either as witnesses or victims, are at risk for committing violence themselves. Basic support includes affordable housing, access to health care, employment, quality day care, quality education, and safe neighborhoods. Specific focus must be directed at teenage parents.

***Priority 2: Promote healthy communities.***

Communities exert powerful influences on the ability of families to raise healthy children. Healthy communities support healthy families,

***Priority 3: Enhance services for early identification and intervention for children, youth, and families at risk for, or involved in violence.***

Coordinated, community-wide programs and services that are able to identify and intervene as early as possible to prevent violence in at-risk families and individuals must be available.

***Priority 4: Increase access to health and mental health care services.***

These services can play an important role in violence prevention (preferable) and treatment.

***Priority 5: Reduce access to and risk from firearms for children and youth.***

It is essential to eliminate easy and unsupervised access to firearms by children and youth, improving firearm safety, and creating a community environment that supports nonviolent solutions to conflict.

***Priority 6: Reduce exposure to media violence.***

Parents and the media industry must be responsive to the extensive evidence documenting the strong, pervasive, and deleterious effects of media violence on children.

***Priority 7: Ensure state and national support and advocacy for solutions to violence through research, public policy, legislation, and funding.***

Clearly the problem of violence transcends the ability of individual communities to solve, without the commitment at the state (and national) level for funding and support of coordinated and comprehensive programs.

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Alaska	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Arizona	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Arkansas	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
California	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Colorado	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Connecticut	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Delaware	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Florida	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Georgia	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Hawaii	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Idaho	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Illinois	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Indiana	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Iowa	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Kansas	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Kentucky	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Louisiana	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Maine	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Maryland	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Massachusetts	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
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Minnesota	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Mississippi	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
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Pennsylvania	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
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South Carolina	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
South Dakota	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
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Texas	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Utah	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
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Virginia	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Washington	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
West Virginia	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Wisconsin	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
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# Aiming for Safety: A Survey of Public Opinion on Gun Policy

BY THE PUBLIC POLICY FORUM  
JEFFREY C. BROWNE, PRESIDENT  
EMILY VAN DUNK, Ph.D., SENIOR RESEARCHER

## Executive Summary

In order to measure public opinion about handgun safety in Wisconsin, the nonpartisan, nonprofit Public Policy Forum of Milwaukee conducted telephone interviews in May 2002 with a representative sample of 600 adult residents of Wisconsin. (The survey methodology is explained in Appendix A.) The survey findings offer the following important insights as Wisconsin policymakers consider methods of protecting both the rights and public safety of Wisconsin families and their guests.

**The nonpartisan, nonprofit Public Policy Forum of Milwaukee conducted telephone interviews in May 2002 with a representative sample of 600 adult residents of Wisconsin.**

- **Changes in the Law.** People want their legislators to take up handgun safety in the next session, and when they do, people want to see an array of changes. A majority of Wisconsinites consider themselves generally in favor of gun control. They support a long list of potential changes in state laws related to handguns, including trigger locks, licensing, registration, manufacturing safety standards and loaded-weapon indicators. However, most people are opposed to measures that would ban handguns entirely or make them easier to obtain.
- **The Politics of Handguns.** Seven of every 10 Wisconsinites wants handgun safety to get legislative attention, and voters are more likely to vote for candidates who support handgun regulation.
- **Consumer Safety.** Just as there are laws saying all new cars need safety features such as seat belts, most Wisconsin residents believe there should be laws saying handguns need to have safety features.
- **Is Perception Reality?** Most Wisconsin residents do not believe that handguns deter violence. Fewer than 30 percent agree that the presence of a handgun in the house is likely to deter criminals or that women who own handguns are safer from violence than women who don't.

- **Causes of Gun Violence.** The most often cited causes of handgun violence are gangs and drugs. Even so, people believe several other factors are related to handgun violence, especially improper storage of handguns, lack of training in proper use of handguns, the media and domestic violence.
- **Gun Ownership Rising.** Gun ownership appears to have increased significantly, with 50 percent of households owning a shotgun, up from 38 percent in the late 1990s. Currently, 26 percent of households have handguns, up from eight percent in 1997.

## Findings

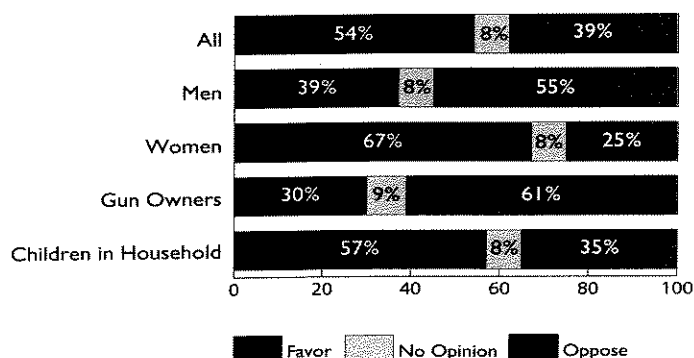
The survey sought information about public opinion regarding a range of topics related to handgun safety in Wisconsin. Following are the topics and the findings. Comparative results are presented in cases where questions were similar to questions that have been asked in previous statewide surveys. Unless otherwise noted, the numbers in the tables are percentages.

## Public Perception about Changes in the Law

A majority of Wisconsinites consider themselves generally in favor of gun control, although the percentage that do has narrowed somewhat in recent years, from 60 percent in 1997 to 53 percent in 2002. Those opposed to the general concept of gun control have increased from 31 percent to 39 percent in that same period, with a deep division on the basis of gender. (Women overwhelmingly favor gun control and a majority of men oppose it.)

Overall, on a scale from one to 10, with one representing weak feelings about the issue and 10 representing the strongest feelings, those surveyed rate the issue a 7.5 on average, indicating fairly strong feelings. Gun-control opponents rate their feelings 7.6, compared to 7.4 for proponents.

Chart 1: Views On Gun Control



**Women overwhelmingly favor gun control and a majority of men oppose it.**

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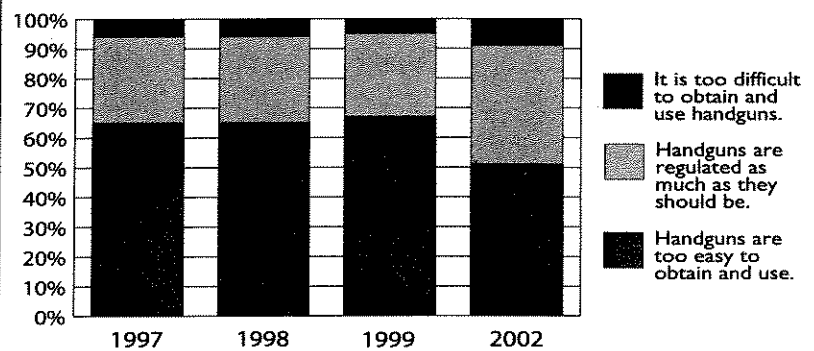
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When it comes to the specific issue of handguns, regardless of their position on gun control in general, Wisconsinites tend to say they are satisfied with the current Wisconsin state laws, and dissatisfaction with current law has declined - from 34 percent dissatisfied in 1997 to 23 percent in 2002. On the other hand, a narrow majority of respondents (51%) believe that handguns are currently too easy to obtain and use. That compares to a minority (36%) who believe handguns are regulated about as much as they should be and just four percent that think handguns are over-regulated. As is often the case with questions involving handguns, women are much more likely than men to favor changes in the law. However, the perception that handguns are too easy to obtain and use has declined from a high of 67 percent in 1999, to just over 50 percent in 2002.

Chart 2: Perceptions About Handgun Regulation



The majority of respondents favor a long list of potential changes in state laws related to handguns, including trigger locks, licensing, registration, manufacturing safety standards, and loaded-weapon indicators. However, most people are opposed to measures that would either ban handguns entirely or make them easier to obtain.

Respondents were asked whether they favor or oppose each of 18 specific changes in policy regarding handguns. These are the potential changes in order of the percentage of respondents favoring the change:

- Require background checks for buyers at gun shows. (89%)
- Require firearms dealers to provide trigger-locking devices with all handgun purchases. (86%)
- Require handguns to have safety locks on them. (83%)
- Require new guns sold in Wisconsin to have built in safety locks. (81%)

- Require people interested in owning a handgun to pass a state test. (77%)
- Require that all handguns have indicators showing whether they are loaded. (77%)
- Require handgun manufacturers to submit models of their handguns to state laboratories to test for compliance with safety standards. (76%)
- Require handgun owners to purchase locks for their handguns. (74%)
- Require long guns to be locked. (71%)
- Require people who already possess a handgun to pass a state test. (58%)
- Create a state agency to set safety standards for the manufacture of handguns. (57%)
- Require the owners of handguns that do not meet state safety standards to surrender the handguns to state authorities. (51%)
- Require a police permit to buy a gun. (45%)
- Prevent the state of Wisconsin and local governments from suing firearms manufacturers. (42%)
- Increase taxes on handgun ammunition. (38%)
- Require communities to provide a safe place to store guns. (37%)
- Allow citizens of Wisconsin to carry concealed weapons. (27%)
- Ban all handguns in the State of Wisconsin. (13%)

Background checks and trigger locks are favored by more than eight of ten survey respondents. In addition, several other policy initiatives receive majority support including requiring individuals interested in owning a handgun to pass a state test, requiring that all handguns have indicators showing whether they are loaded and requiring handgun manufacturers to submit models of their handguns to state laboratories to test for compliance with safety standards. However, requiring permits, increasing taxes, and especially banning all handguns were favored by only a small minority of those surveyed.

**Background checks and trigger locks are favored by more than eight of ten survey respondents.**

**Homicide rate higher in Wisconsin**

Firearms often used in homicide, study finds

of homicide methods in 2000

17-year-old boy

'Smart guns' police on the way

Firearm that recognizes owner could be used in 2000, manufacturer says

DAVE DALRYMPLE, State Senator

"Smart guns" recognize owner through fingerprints or skin scans, could be used in 2000, manufacturer says

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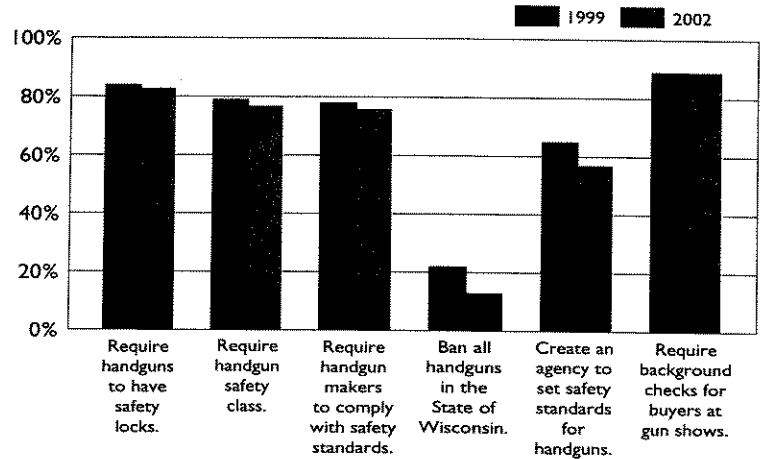
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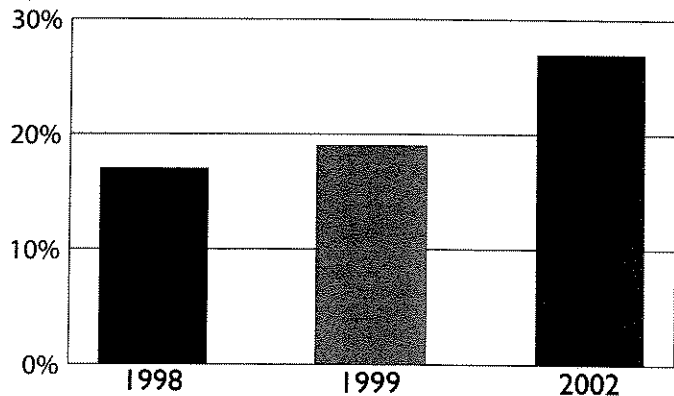
Opinion on these issues has remained remarkably steady over the past six years. No issue changes from receiving majority to minority support. In addition, even a small minority favor banning handguns, 13 percent versus 22 percent in 1999.

**Chart 3: Support For Handgun Policy Changes**



Legislation allowing individuals over 21 to obtain licenses to carry concealed weapons was introduced in this last session. Public support for this effort remains low, but has grown slightly since 1999.

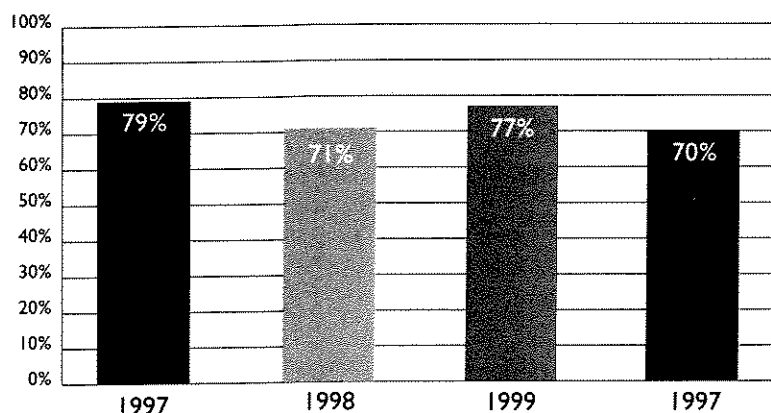
**Chart 4: Percent Who Favor Allowing Citizens Of Wisconsin to Carry Concealed Weapons.**



## The Politics of Handgun Safety Legislation

Although a variety of legislative actions relating to handguns enjoy widespread support among Wisconsinites, whether that intent can be translated into tangible action is another question. In each of the four surveys that we have conducted on handgun safety over the past six years, we have found consistently high support for having the Wisconsin legislature take up the issue of handgun safety. Overall, 7 of every 10 Wisconsinites want the issue to get the attention of their state legislators; that is a decline somewhat from eight of 10 in 1997.

**Chart 5: Percent Who Believe The Wisconsin Legislature Should Take Up Handgun Safety.**



As in previous years, women are most likely to support legislative work on this issue. Although both genders favor legislative action, 77 percent of women consider it a priority compared to 61 percent of men. Handgun owners are nearly evenly divided on the question, with 50 percent believing the legislature should take up this issue. For people who do not own guns, 77 percent favor legislative action.

**In each of the four surveys that we have conducted on handgun safety, we have found consistently high support for having the Wisconsin legislature take up the issue of handgun safety.**

**Table 1.**

**Percent who believe the Wisconsin legislature should take up issue of handgun safety by selected characteristics.**

	Total	Male	Female	Gun Owner	Handgun Owner	Non-Gun Owner	Favor Gun Control	Oppose Gun Control
Yes	70	61	77	57	50	77	84	52
No	24	33	16	36	46	17	11	41
Don't know/refused	6	5	7	7	5	6	5	7

**Our survey research suggests that residents of Wisconsin are more likely than not to vote for candidates who support handgun regulation.**

A scanning of 2001 legislative proposals indicates that bills involving handguns have centered on opposition to handgun controls. Among these are: expansion of conceal and carry laws; granting of immunity from civil liability for any action brought by an individual or group for an injury or death caused by a firearm; and prohibiting governmental units such as cities or school districts from bringing a lawsuit against a person who manufactures or sells handguns. Specific legislation dealing with handgun safety such as trigger locks or licensing were not introduced in the 2001 legislative session.

Nonetheless, our survey research suggests that residents of Wisconsin are more likely than not to vote for candidates who support handgun regulation. Approximately 64 percent of all those surveyed said they would be more likely to vote for a candidate that supported licensing requirements for handgun owners. Even amongst handgun owners, about one-third would be more likely to vote for a candidate that supports licensing.

**Table 2.**

**If your state legislator expressed support for requiring all individuals who want to own a handgun to pass a state mandated licensing requirement, how would it affect your vote? Would it make you much more likely, somewhat more likely, somewhat less likely or much less likely to vote for the person?**

	Total	Male	Female	Gun Owner	Handgun Owner	Non-Gun Owner	Favor Gun Control	Oppose Gun Control
Much more likely	30	21	36	11	13	39	39	15
Somewhat more likely	34	25	41	25	18	38	44	19
Somewhat less likely	18	21	16	24	24	15	9	29
Much less likely	17	30	9	37	44	7	6	34
Don't know/refused	2	3	1	3	2	2	3	2

Even so, opponents of gun regulation tend to be more adamant about their views on the subject. Handgun owners and men are more likely than non-owners of guns, women and proponents of gun regulation to believe a candidate's stand on handgun regulation is important. For example, 57 percent of handgun owners, compared to just 31 percent among people who do not own guns, responded on the survey that a candidate's position on handgun regulation is "very important." Clearly gun control opponents, gun owners and men think they have more of a vested interest in this issue and are more likely to pay attention to this issue during election time.



## AIMING FOR SAFETY

**Table 3.**

How important is a candidate's position on handgun regulation when you decide how to vote in a state legislative election? Is it a very important factor, somewhat important or not at all important?

	Total	Male	Female	Gun Owner	Handgun Owner	Non-Gun Owner	Favor Gun Control	Oppose Gun Control
Very important	36	44	29	44	57	31	30	46
Somewhat important	51	42	58	44	33	55	58	43
Not at all important	12	11	12	11	10	12	12	11

Ultimately, of course, the majority among the public does not decide issues such as handgun legislation. The minority who vote does. Therefore, our analysis compared the responses of likely voters with responses to those less likely to vote in the upcoming November election. Because surveys consistently show that many Wisconsin residents who intend to vote do not actually do so, likely voters were limited to those who responded that they are "absolutely certain" to vote in the November election.

The survey found that likely voters, taken as a whole, tend to resemble the views of gun owners more than they resemble the general population. For example, even though 53 percent of Wisconsin residents favor the general concept of gun control, just 41 percent of likely voters do. Among people less likely to vote, 60 percent favor gun control. Similarly, a minority (41% of people who said they are absolutely certain to vote believe that handguns are too easy to obtain and use; that compared to 58 percent of people less likely to vote.

When it comes to specific legislation, most likely voters favor a wide range of potential legislation that would restrict access to handguns, but they are somewhat less likely to favor such measures than is the general population. For example, 68 percent of likely voters favor requiring people interested in owning handguns to pass a state test; although that represents a solid majority, the percentage favoring the measure is much higher (84%) among people less likely to vote. Conversely, likely voters are much more likely (35%) to support allowing citizens to carry concealed weapons than are less likely voters (21%).

This analysis also reveals why legislative candidates may be reluctant to take a stand on handguns despite broad public support for doing so. When asked how a legislator's support for handgun licensing would affect their votes, 43 percent of likely voters said it would make them less likely to vote for the candidate. Among the group of respondents who are less likely to vote in November, the

**When it comes to specific legislation, most likely voters favor a wide range of potential legislation that would restrict access to handguns.**

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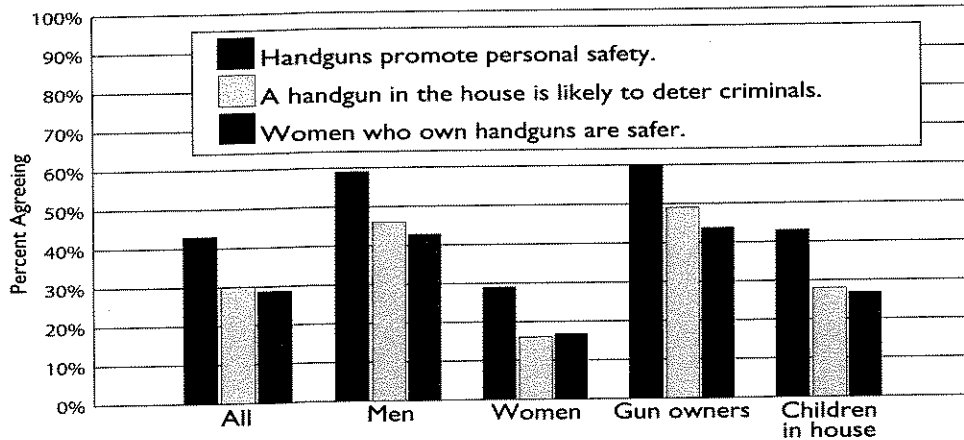
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people died by firearm in Wis-consin in 1998: 276 suicides, 102 homicides and 12 accidents.

**Chart 7: Perceptions About the Effect of Handguns**



Those surveyed also differ on other perceptions about handguns, their availability and their effect on society. Most people do not believe that gun violence is getting worse in their communities or that handguns can be easily obtained. However, the majority perceives handgun violence as an issue that extends well beyond urban borders; just 29 percent in the survey agreed with the statement: "Handgun violence is mostly an urban issue." A larger percentage, 43 percent, agree that handguns promote personal safety, but a slightly higher percentage, 46 percent, disagree.

Despite the division of opinion overall, there are two concepts related to handguns that resonate across the demographic spectrum. When those surveyed were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with nine separate statements, the following two resonated with survey respondents:

1. **"Bearing a firearm is an American right."** Three-fourths of those surveyed agreed, including the majority of women, non-gun owners and all other demographic groups.
2. **"Just as there are laws saying all new cars need safety features such as seat belts, there should be laws saying handguns need to have safety features."** Of respondents, 83 percent agreed, including the majority of men, handgun owners and all other demographic groups.

**Most people do not believe that gun violence is getting worse in their communities or that handguns can be easily obtained.**

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WISCONSIN	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Agree	78	82	79	80	73	71
Disagree	22	18	21	20	27	29
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

## WISCONSIN

### identally shoots

Automatic handgun hitting child in chest  
time of the shooting said.  
The boys thought taken all the bullets handgun when the gun's magazine bullet remained in it. Horvath said.  
The two classmates friends and Horvath were playing with guns, including a .38 Smith & Wesson.

MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL

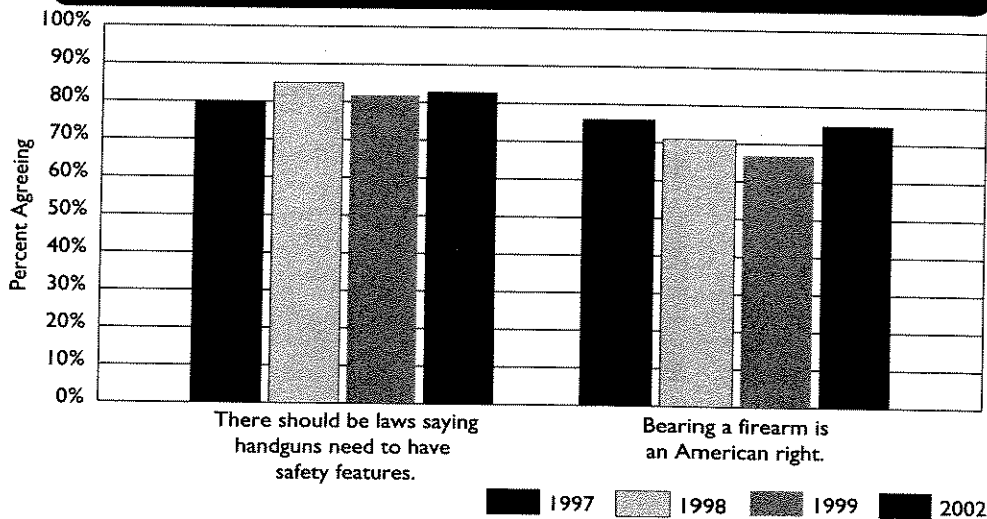
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**Chart 8: Two Statements About Guns That Resonate With Wisconsin Adults**



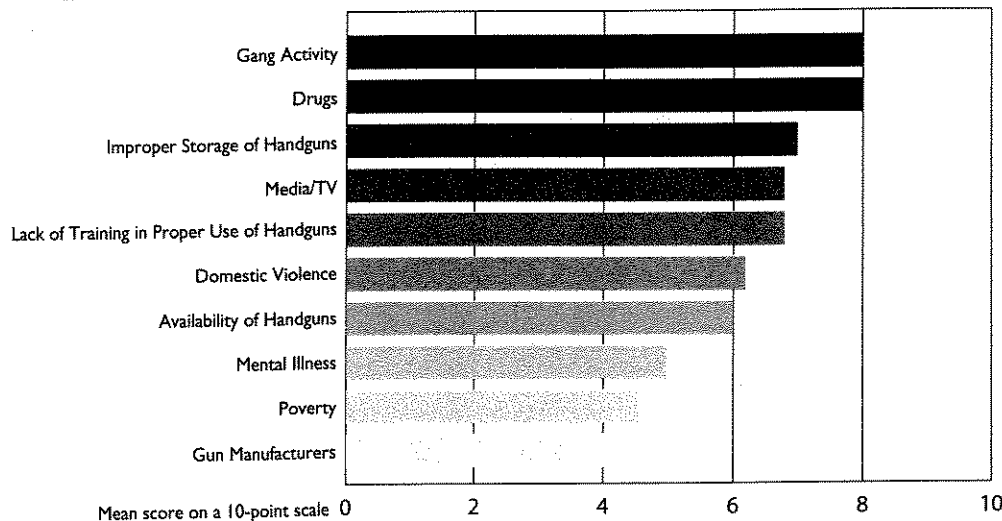
The extent of agreement on those two fundamental ideas has remained steady over the past five years. However, other perceptions about handguns have changed somewhat in Wisconsin since the late 1990s. The percent of those surveyed who agree that handguns promote personal safety and deter criminals, while still in the minority, has increased somewhat since 1997. And the percent that disagree that women who own handguns are safer has declined from 68 percent to 56 percent.

**Other perceptions about handguns have changed somewhat in Wisconsin since the late 1990s.**

## The Causes of Handgun Violence

Wisconsinites tend to perceive that handgun violence correlates more strongly with illegal drug and/or gang activity than with any of a number of other possible factors, although people believe there are several other important factors related to handgun violence as well. Also scoring high among causes of handgun violence: improper storage of handguns, lack of training in proper use of handguns, the media and domestic violence. By contrast, poverty, mental illness and gun manufacturers were less likely to be blamed for handgun violence.

**Chart 9: Perceived Relationship Between Handgun Violence And Factors Related to Handgun Violence**



Interviewers read a list of 10 possible factors that might be related to handgun violence to survey respondents. Those surveyed were asked to rate each of them on a scale from one to 10, with one meaning the factor was not at all related to handgun violence and 10 meaning it was one of the most important factors. On average, drugs and gang activity each scored an eight on the 10-point scale. Women and people who do not own guns rated both somewhat higher than did men and gun-owners. Factors also scoring high (between six and eight on average) were those relating to gun handling and training as well as domestic issues. Poverty, mental health issues and gun-makers scored an average of five or below.

**Homicide rates higher in Wisconsin**

Firearms often used in homicide, study finds

Journal Sentinel

Ar-old boy

Harvath said he knew who was working at the boy's steps at the time of the shooting.

'Smart guns' police on the way

Firearm that records owner could be used in 2009, manufacturer says

By Dave Daley of the Journal Sentinel

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hooting occurred at a 9th Ave. said Police Sgt. Horvath.

his 8-year-old brother, friend were playing with guns, in the time of the shooting.

The boys thought taken all the bullets handgun when the gun's magazine bullet remained in Horvath said.

The two classmates friends and he both friends.

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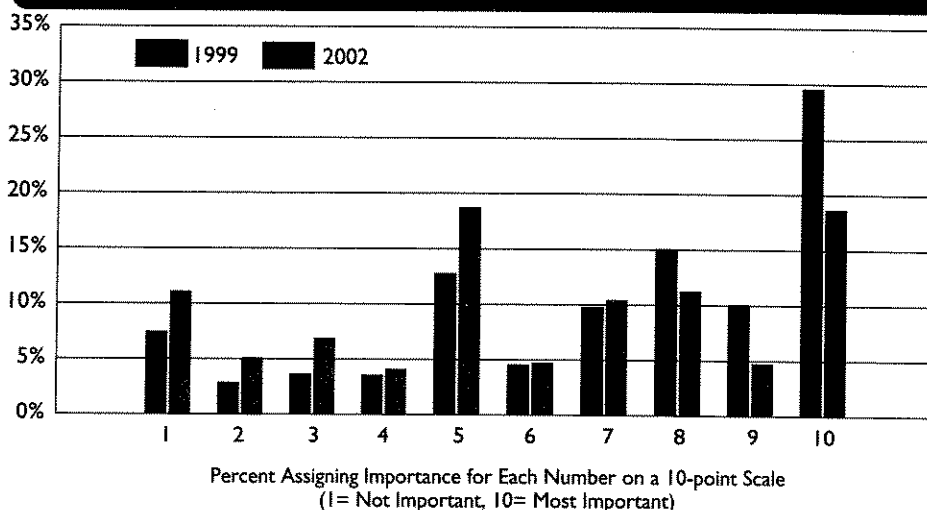
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Perceptions about the importance of access to handguns as a factor in handgun violence differ among men and women and have changed in recent years. Women tended far more than men to see the availability of handguns as a key factor in violence; 45 percent of women rated handgun availability an eight or above, compared to just 25 percent of men. When the identical question was asked in 1999, Wisconsinites of both genders were much more likely to relate handgun access to handgun violence. In 1999, 55 percent of respondents rated availability of handguns an eight or above, compared to 35 percent in the latest survey.

**Chart 10: Perceived Importance of Handgun Availability as a Factor in Handgun Violence**



**Experience with handguns divides Wisconsin into roughly two equal groups: those who have fired a handgun and those who have not.**

## Wisconsin's Experience With Guns and Handguns

Experience with handguns divides Wisconsin adults into two roughly equal groups: those who have fired a handgun and those who have not. Of those surveyed, 54 percent said they had fired a handgun at least once in their lives. Another 27 percent said they had never touched a handgun; whereas, 18 percent said they had touched a handgun, but never fired one.

## AIMING FOR SAFETY

However, there is a wide and deep gender gap on this question. Whereas the vast majority of men have experience with handguns (80% having fired one), the majority of women do not; nearly half of all women (45%) said they have never touched a handgun and another 24 percent touched a handgun, but never fired one - nearly 70 percent. On the other hand, nearly eight out of 10 men have fired a handgun, almost all of those more than once.

**Chart 11: Which of the following statements best describes your experience with handguns?**



These findings carry over into other aspects of experience with guns: whereas just six percent of women said they expect to purchase a handgun in the next two years, 24 percent of men expect to. However, men and women are equally likely to say they have checked the availability or security of guns in homes visited by their children; among both genders, just over 21 percent said they had done so.

**Whereas just six percent of women said they expect to purchase a handgun in the next two years, 24 percent of men expect to.**

Other	Male	20	20	20	20
	Female	10	10	10	10
Total	Male	219	219	219	219
	Female	63	63	63	63

Other categories: Kenosha, Ozaukee, Racine, Seaside, Walworth, Washington and Waukesha counties. Males, who make up 49% of the total population, are more likely to own guns than females.

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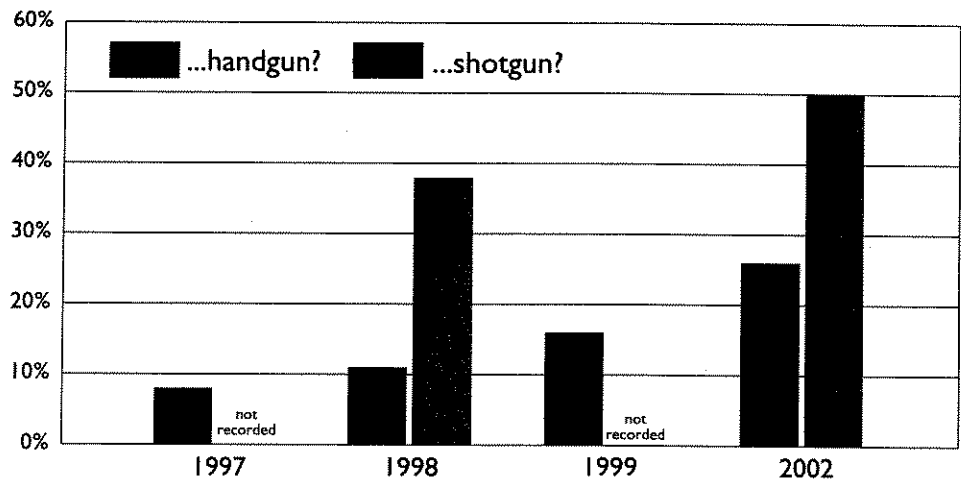
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**The percentage of people planning to purchase handguns in the future has remained steady since 1997.**

The experience of Wisconsinites with guns has changed somewhat in recent years. Gun ownership appears to have increased significantly, with 50 percent in the latest survey saying someone in the household owns a shotgun, up from 38 percent in 1998. In the 2002 survey, 26 percent of respondents said someone in the household owned a handgun, up from 16 percent in 1999, 11 percent in 1998 and just eight percent in 1997. Reasons for the increase are a matter of speculation, but two events that separated the latest survey from previous ones are the 9-11 attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon and the "Y2K" anxiety that accompanied the beginning of the new millennium. Two other findings support speculation that such events led to greater experience with handguns; although the percentage of people who have experience firing a handgun increased after those events, the percentage of people planning to purchase handguns in the future has remained steady since 1997.

**Chart 12: Does anyone in your household own a...  
...handgun? ...shotgun?**



Note: Shotgun ownership was not recorded in 1997 and 1999.

## Appendix A — Survey Methodology

Telephone interviews were conducted in May 2002 with 600 adult residents of Wisconsin. Respondents were representative of the general adult population of the state with respect to race, gender, education, income and geography.

The goal in conducting the survey was to gain an understanding of the knowledge, opinions and attitudes toward handgun violence and safety by adult residents of Wisconsin. The survey included questions about the respondents themselves to control for possible differences in knowledge and opinion based on their own backgrounds.

Interviews were conducted by Lein/Spiegelhoff Inc., a survey research company in Brookfield, Wisconsin. Lein/Spiegelhoff ordered telephone numbers at random from directory listings for the state, plus telephone numbers that are generated at random from the computer to represent unpublished/unlisted numbers. This ensures that the final survey reaches households with telephones regardless of whether the telephone number is published or listed. Interviews were conducted with the adult in a household who "...celebrated the most recent birthday." If the person was not available, an appointment was made for a callback. As many as three callbacks were conducted.

Even when the telephone sample is random, there is imprecision that exists between the sample results and the population. The magnitude of the imprecision is reduced as the sample population increases. The following table identifies the number of interviews completed and the sampling error by category at a 95 percent confidence interval. These sampling errors may be interpreted as indicating the range (plus or minus the figure shown) that the results may be expected to vary from the results that would have been obtained by interviewing all adults in Wisconsin who could have been interviewed.

	Number of Completed Interviews	Sampling Error at 95% Confidence
All Wisconsin Adults	600	3.3%
Men	282	3.9%
Women	318	9.3%
Gun Owners	225	9.9%
Handgun Owners	109	4.7%
Non-Gun Owners	375	5.2%
Children in Household	229	4.3%
No Children in House	371	6.0%

**Homicide rate  
higher  
in Wisconsin**

**Firearms often used in homicide,study says**

**Study of homicide methods in 2000**

**17-year-old boy**

**'Smart guns' police on the way**

**Firearm that records owner could be used in 2000, manufacturer says**

**Implications of the Journal Sentinel's study**

**So-called "smart guns" that recognize owners through fingerprints, radio emissions or skin conductivity — could be available by 2000, says**

**17-year-old boy, 7**

**gun accident**

**his father's house**

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**Milwaukee area**

**people died by gunshot in Wisconsin in 1999: 270 suicides, 136 homicides and 12 accidents**



## ABOUT OUR ORGANIZATION



WISCONSIN COUNCIL ON  
**CHILDREN  
& FAMILIES**  
*Voices For Wisconsin's Children*

The Wisconsin Council on Children and Families serves as Wisconsin's leading voice of, and premiere advocate for, children throughout the state.

Emphasizing the core values of fairness, caring, and community, the Council conducts a variety of advocacy activities, including organizing expert research, educating the public, supporting key issues and legislation, and coordinating grassroots activity in communities all across Wisconsin.

In addition to publishing the *WisKids Count Data Book* – which seeks to enrich local, state, and national discussions concerning ways to secure better futures for all children – the Council accomplishes its advocacy through several publications; educational conferences throughout the state; and key projects like the Better Badger Baby Bus Tour, W-2 Watch, the Wisconsin Budget Project, and Advocacy Camp among others.

[www.wccf.org](http://www.wccf.org)

### MISSION STATEMENT

The Wisconsin Council on Children and Families is a statewide, multi-issue child advocacy organization. It works to improve the well-being of children and families by advocating for effective health, education, justice and human service programs that are accessible and equitable for children.



16 North Carroll Street • Madison, WI 53703 • (608) 284-0580 • FAX: (608) 284-0583 • [www.wccf.org](http://www.wccf.org)

## MYTHS & SPIN

CM-3

Spin: Half of gun deaths occur in home where gun is kept

Fact: About half of gun deaths are suicides. Most suicides occur at home.

Spin: 25 - 50% of vendors at gun shows are unlicensed dealers.

Fact: Only true if one counts vendors who aren't selling guns (books, accessories).

Spin: A gun in the home is 43 times more likely to kill a family member than be used in self defense.

Fact: On the one hand, this estimate includes suicides, but includes self defense *only if the bad guy dies*. Only wounding or scaring off the attacker is not counted, even if it's self defense.

Counting times the attacker was not killed that study also indicated that you're 176 times more likely to use a gun for defense than have a family member shot to death.

Spin: A household with one or more guns was 4.8 times more likely to be the site of a suicide.

Fact: The study was biased to make guns look bad. Only suicides at home were included "Our study was restricted to suicides occurring in the victim's home because previous study has indicated that most suicides committed with guns occur there."

Spin: You're more likely to be killed with a gun by an acquaintance than a stranger.

Fact: This includes as acquaintances: cab drivers and their fares, drug dealers and users, prostitutes, pimps, and "John's", rival gang members and others with such "dear" relationships.

Spin: Fewer guns in circulation will reduce murders.

Fact: Number of handguns in circulation rose 69% from 1974 to 1988. Handgun murders declined 27% over the same period.

# CRIME AND MISUSE

CM-1

Homicides in U.S. - 1992      17,790

Suicides in U.S. - 1992      18,169

Source: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of  
the United States, 1995

Approx. Number of guns in U.S. - 200,000,000

Approx. Number of gun owners in U.S. - 80,000,000

Approx. Percentage of guns used in crime - 0.2

Murder, rape, assault, robbery, etc

Approx. Percentage of guns NOT used in crime - 99.8

Bob S. Sutter  
262-742-4752

## Fatal Accidents 1996 Vs. 1995

SP-1

<u>Cause</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>% change</u>	<u>% of '96 total</u>	<u>Deaths per 100K</u> <u>Population</u>
Motor vehicles	43363	43649	1	46	16.5
Falls	13986	14986	7	16	5.6
Poisoning	9072	9510	5	10	3.6
Fires	3761	3741	-1	4	1.4
Drowning	3790	3488	-8	4	1.3
Choking	3185	3206	1	3	1.2
Medical mishaps	2712	2919	8	3	1.1
Firearms	1225	1134	-7	1	0.4

### Sources:

National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) "Deaths From 282 Selected Causes, By 5-Year Age Groups, Race, & Sex", covers 1996  
National Safety Council (NSC) Accident Facts: 1997 Edition

1996 fatal firearms accidents totalling 1134 is an all-time low, 22% lower than 10 years previous, 65% lower than 1930

## Accidents and Kids, Aged 14 and under - 1996

SP-2

<u>Cause</u>	<u>% of Deaths</u>
Motor vehicles	47
Drowning	15
Fires	12
Choking	3.3
Firearms	2

**NOTE:**

The 2% of deaths related to firearms is 138 deaths. If 138 is 2%, the total accidental deaths for children 14 and under is 50 times that, about 6900.

## Firearms and Kids

SP-3

**SPIN:** In 1996, 4613 children were killed with guns.

**FACT:** In 1996 there were 4613 firearms deaths in the 0 - 19 age group.

**QUESTION:** What is a child?

Age Group	<u>0 - 14</u>	<u>15 - 19</u>
Total deaths	692 (15%)	3921 (85%) = 100%
Homicides	379 (55%)	2457 (63%)
Suicides	162 (23%)	1147 (29%)
Accidents	138 (20%)	238 (6%)
	<u>98%</u>	<u>98%</u>

### OTHER INFO:

WGN News, 7/8/99 reported that a study by the State of Illinois showed that 71% of illegal gun use was gang related.

Firearms are used to protect life and limb in self defense an estimated 2.5 Million times per year.

(Lots & others)

*Black study*